J. B. Girard Papers: Finding Aid

Processed by Brooke M. Black, completed September 28, 1998; machine-readable finding aid created by Xiuzhi Zhou; supplementary encoding and revision by Diann Benti.

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Overview of the Collection

Title: J. B. Girard Papers

Dates (inclusive): 1861-1918

Collection Number: mssGirard papers

Creator: Girard, J. B. (Joseph Basil), 1846-1918.

Extent: 120 pieces in 2 boxes

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Abstract: This collection contains diaries, sketchbooks, military appointments, travel orders, and other documents of J. B. Girard (1846-1918), a surgeon in the United States Army Medical Corps who served at several different military posts, including Hawaii, between 1867 and 1910.

Language: English.

Access

Open to qualified researchers by prior application through the Reader Services Department. For more information, contact Reader Services.

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Preferred Citation


Provenance

Purchased from Jane Hemphill, Colonel Girard's granddaughter, January 1989.

Related Material

84 drawings and watercolors by J. B. Girard purchased with the collection are kept in the Virginia Steele Scott Gallery of American Art at the Huntington.

Biographical Note

Joseph Basil (J. B.) Girard (1846-1918) emigrated from France to the United States in 1861, at the age of fifteen. In 1867 he graduated as a doctor of medicine from the University of Michigan; in that same year he received an appointment to the United States Army Medical Corps in which he served until his retirement in 1910 with the rank of lieutenant-colonel and assistant surgeon general. He married Louise Oury in 1875; they had three children, Agnes, Louise, and Laura. Girard was stationed at several army posts throughout his military career. He served in Arizona, Wyoming, Missouri, Hawaii, Nebraska, Georgia, and Washington State. He also served as Chief Surgeon for the Division of the Philippines from 1904-1906 and for the Department of Texas from 1907-1910. He was a member of the Scientific Society of San Antonio and the Arizona Pioneers Historical Society. He was also a skilled amateur artist who produced many pencil sketches and watercolors throughout his life. These sketches and paintings often included western landscapes and scenes of army life at military posts. Girard's work also contains several sketches he did while traveling through Europe. After retirement, J. B. Girard remained in San Antonio where he died in 1918.

Scope and Content

The collection includes Girard's diaries, certificates, military appointments, travel orders, sketchbooks, photographs, passports and newspaper clippings. The sketchbooks contain sketches of western landscapes and European landscapes. The photographs in the collection are of J. B. Girard, his family, and family friends.

There are eight diaries in the collection, which span the years 1900-1907. The diaries detail the Girard family and their day-to-day activities, including visits with friends and the extensive traveling they did moving to and from military posts. The diaries also give detailed accounts of Girard's military duties including inspections of hospitals at several military posts in the mid-West. The diaries often discuss Girard's failing health, his depression after his wife's death and his increasing unhappiness with his life and his service in the U. S. Army. In the memoranda section in the last pages of the 1903-1907
diaries, there is information concerning bonds Girard purchased throughout the years. These diaries also include several addresses of Girard's family members and acquaintances.

**Indexing Terms**
The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the [Huntington Library's Online Catalog](https://www.huntington.org).  

**Subjects**
- Girard, J. B. (Joseph Basil), 1846-1918.
- United States. Army -- Surgeons -- Archives.
- United States. Army. Medical Corps -- History -- Sources.
- Artists -- United States -- Archives.
- Hawaii -- History -- 19th century -- Sources.

**Forms/Genres**
- Certificates -- United States.
- Diaries -- United States.
- Military commissions -- United States.
- Orders (military records) -- United States.
- Photographs -- United States.
- Sketchbooks -- United States.

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**Box 1**  
**Diaries. 1900-1907**
- Physical Description: 8 volumes
- Handwritten diaries of J. B. Girard.

**Box 2**  
**Documents, sketchbooks, photographs, ephemera**

**Folder 1**  
**1890, Nov. 9. Baptismal Certificate for Laura Henrietta Girard.**
- Physical Description: 1 piece.

**Folder 2**  
**1907, Apr. 8. Certificate of membership in Arizona Pioneers Historical Society for J. B. Girard.**
- Physical Description: 1 piece.

**Folder 3**  
**1861-1910. Certificates, Passports and other Documents.**
- Physical Description: 6 pieces.

**Folder 4**  
**1867-1869. Military appointments and travel orders for J. B. Girard.**
- Physical Description: 14 pieces.

**Folder 5**  
**1870-1879. Military appointments and travel orders for J. B. Girard.**
- Physical Description: 23 pieces.

**Folder 6**  
**1880-1889. Military appointments and travel orders for J. B. Girard.**
- Physical Description: 16 pieces.

**Folder 8**  
**1900-1910. Military appointments and travel orders for J. B. Girard.**
- Physical Description: 20 pieces.

**Folder 9**  
**1885-1888. Sketchbook [10 sketches of scenes in Greece].**
- Physical Description: 1 piece.

**Folder 10**  
**1895-1908. Sketchbook [9 sketches of scenes in Arizona].**
- Physical Description: 1 piece.
| Folder 11 | 1866-1917. Photographs - J. B. Girard.  
|          | Physical Description: 10 pieces. |
| Folder 12 | 1886-1901. Photographs - J. B. Girard and others.  
|          | Physical Description: 5 pieces. |
|          | Physical Description: 7 pieces. |